

Georgia Emergency Management Agency



***Requesting a Presidential Disaster Declaration**

When the Governor requests federal assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (Stafford Act), he must certify that the severity and magnitude of the disaster exceed state and local capabilities; certify that federal assistance is necessary to supplement the efforts and available resources of the state and local governments, disaster relief organizations, and compensation by insurance for disaster-related losses; confirm execution of the state's emergency plan; and certify adherence to cost-sharing requirements.

A Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) is conducted under the declaration process to assist the Governor to determine if a request for assistance should be made. These assessments are conducted in counties affected by the disaster.

The Preliminary Damage Assessment

This PDA team comprises local officials and personnel from GEMA, FEMA and the U.S. Small Business Administration. The team reviews the types of damage or emergency costs incurred by local government and the impact to critical facilities, such as public utilities, hospitals, schools, and fire and police departments. They will also look at the affect on individuals and businesses, including the number damaged, the number of citizens displaced, and the threat to health and safety caused by the storm event. Additional data from the Red Cross or other local voluntary agencies may also be reviewed.

During the assessment, the team will collect estimates of the expenses and damages. This information can be used by the Governor to support a declaration request. Showing the cost of response efforts, such as emergency personnel overtime, other emergency services, and damage to private property, that is beyond state and local recovery capabilities will help the Governor certify that the damage exceeds state and local resources.

The Declaration Process

As set forth in the Stafford Act, the Governor will seek a presidential declaration by submitting a written request to the president through the FEMA regional office. In this request, the Governor certifies that the combined local, county and state resources are insufficient and that the situation is beyond their recovery capabilities. Following a FEMA regional and national office review of the request and the findings of the PDA, FEMA provides the president an analysis of the situation and a recommended course of action.